Contribution of Réussir l'égalité Femmes-Hommes
On the DRAFT General recommendation on Trafficking in

Women and Girls in the Context of Global Migration

At
the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

The organisation Réussir l'égalité Femmes-Hommes (REFH) alerts and acts against all forms of gender-based discrimination and violence. Its main, but not exclusive, field of action is education, from kindergarten to higher education and research, at all levels: local, national and international. REFH acts to ensure that women's skills are recognized and promoted in order to increase their role and decision-making power in professional, social and public life. The organisation Réussir l'égalité Femmes-Hommes works to raise awareness of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women - CEDAW -, particularly in schools.

The organisation Réussir l'égalité Femmes-Hommes is pleased to have this opportunity offered by the CEDAW Committee to comment on its draft general recommendation concerning trafficking in women and girls and in particular the sexual exploitation of migrant women and girls. She thanks the Committee for this consultation.

The organisation Réussir l'égalité Femmes-Hommes is totally opposed to the classification of prostitution as "*work*"[[1]](#footnote-2) or "*service*". Prostitution is violence, as the Committee says in article 14 "*gender-based violence against women*" and in article 20 "*Trafficking in women is rooted in gender discrimination,gender based structural inequality*". Talking about "*work*" legitimizes the prostitution system and ignores the pimps and "buyers" behind sexual exploitation. Prostitution is at the very root of inequality between women and men, in a patriarchal society that consecrates the inferiority of women, considering them as objects that can be bought and therefore women and girls are far from being in a position of equality.

The organisation Réussir l'égalité Femmes-Hommes therefore calls for the systematic addition of **exploitation of prostitution[[2]](#footnote-3)** (as expressed in the title of article 6) whenever trafficking is mentioned, a gender-specific trafficking that almost exclusively concerns women and girls. The organisation Réussir l'égalité Femmes-Hommes also calls for the word "**children**" not to be used, but rather the word "**girls**", thus marking the fact that it is their gender that is here the source of trafficking.

* Article 14: *the Committee acknowledges that trafficking in women and girls is unequivocally a phenomenon rooted in gender-based discrimination and inequality and constitutes gender-based violence against women*

**A gendered approach**, within a framework of male domination, is therefore required to address this issue.

* *Article 20:*  *"Trafficking in women is rooted in gender-based discrimination, gender-based structural inequality*”

But the phrase "*and the demand for cheap and/or forced labour, including the demand for sexual exploitation,*" can imply that sexual exploitation is "labour".

Write instead "*the demand for cheap and/or forced labour* **and the demand for prostitution**".

* Article 21: *Inequalities are manifested in women’s and girls’ lower access to education and vocational training opportunities*

The organisation Réussir l'égalité Femmes-Hommes expresses its agreement with the Committee's emphasis on the important link between lack of education and trafficking and sexual exploitation: in article 22 " *Women at risk of being trafficked are more likely to be impoverished, uneducated,*”, in article 24 "*low level of education*", in articles 28 and 48: “*the limited access for women and girls to education”*.

To address the root causes of trafficking and sexual exploitation, the Committee emphasizes "*access to education"* ; in article 26 item b "*Providing women and girls in situations of disadvantage with access to basic services, including education, information, health care and employment opportunities;*

“*access to education*” in article 42 and "*educational and employment opportunities*" to enhance assistance and protection for victims of trafficking in article 72.

For the organisation Réussir l'égalité Femmes-Hommes, which considers equal access to education as the fundamental lever for equality between girls and boys, women and men, the schooling of refugee and migrant girls and the training of refugee and migrant women in their rights and a profession is essential so that they can have a decent life and economic and financial independence.

**The** organisation **Réussir l'égalité Femmes-Hommes suggests making this a specific point in article 42.**

* Article 27: *Discourage the demand that fosters all forms of exploitation of persons, especially women and children, that leads to human trafficking*

The objective is indeed to end prostitution and sexual exploitation by drying up the demand in order to remove the very reason for trafficking. It is therefore a matter of pursuing a policy of prevention.

Add an item on prevention: **The prevention of trafficking requires making "buyers" responsible and making children aware from an early age of the need for equality between girls and boys, women and men and respect for others, human beings who cannot be bought**.

* Article 32 *Ensure women’s meaningful participation in trafficking prevention efforts***.**

The organisation Réussir l'égalité Femmes-Hommes runs many training courses in schools and believes it is necessary to add:

**Education on sexuality, affective life and to gender equality should include a section on trafficking and sexual exploitation as a preventive measure, in particular by taking into account the expertise and voice of trafficked women and girls.**

* Article 34 (...)*The war-related demand for women’s sexual, economic and military exploitation is a growing trend in situations of conflict*

**States must set an example by committing themselves not to organise places of prostitution for soldiers and to severely punish any act of rape. They must also undertake to punish severely any purchase of sex in exchange for money, food or services.**

* Article 42**:** *access to education and livelihoods*

Make of access to education and livelihoods a specific point in article 42.

**Education and vocational training for refugees and migrants girls and women, in order to reduce poverty and exposition to traffic, must be given priority.**

* Article 58: *Employment and labour framework*
1. proposes labour legislation "*in unregulated or unmonitored economic sectors that rely on migrant women’s labour”*

**However, prostitution cannot be considered as work or a service, it is violence.**

The organisation Réussir l'égalité Femmes-Hommes, an organisation for the defence of women's rights, asserts that under no circumstances can prostitution be considered as *work* or a service. Prostitution is the result of men's power over women in our male-dominated societies, a power increased by the inferiority of women victims of trafficking: poverty, precariousness, conflicts, displacement and migration, violence experienced during childhood and adulthood, members of discriminated ethnic minorities, disabled women and girls, etc.

After " *in unregulated or unmonitored economic sectors that rely on migrant women’s labour* “ add **with exclusion of prostitution**.

The organisation Réussir l'égalité Femmes-Hommes believes that it is necessary to prioritise and facilitate access to a profession through training in order to provide an alternative to prostitution for migrant women and victims of trafficking rather than to improve the conditions in which they live as a result of their sexual exploitation. Funding is therefore needed to help women who want to leave prostitution and sexual exploitation.

* Article 58 (b) and (c) "*care*".

**“Sexual services" are not *care***

In the "*care*" sector, referred to in this paragraph, it is important to clarify that under no circumstances can the "sexual surrogacy" advocated by some for persons with disabilities be considered to constitute care. Male sexual difficulties cannot be solved by pseudo-medicalized provision of the female body.

* Point (f) in Article 58

*"Facilitate the self-organisation and unionisation of women migrant workers in unregulated or unmonitored labour sectors* ", prostitution must be excluded. Such unions of prostitutes are recuperated and manipulated by traffickers and pimps to justify their practices and avoid the criminalization of clients.

After *“in unregulated or unmonitored labour sectors”* add **prostitution being excluded**.

* Article 68 item j: *Empower communities through support and consultation to build strong allies for anti-trafficking efforts, including faith-based actors who could provide critical information about trafficked women.*

It is well known how decisions can be made under influence. The organisation Réussir l'égalité Femmes-Hommes considers that trafficked and sexually exploited persons can be manipulated by outsiders, including faith-based actors.

**Therefore, it is better not to mention these faith-based actors.**

* Article 68 item g:*intensifying nationwide education and awareness-raising campaigns about the risks and criminal nature of trafficking*

**Education in schools must include information on trafficking and sexual exploitation.**

* Article 72 item l

The organisation Réussir l'égalité Femmes-Hommes calls for ensuring that "*respect for the cultural identity of victims*" does not allow cultural traditions and customs to be contrary to women's rights and not be instrumentalised to the detriment of women's rights.

Add after " *respectful of the cultural identity of the victims***”; while ensuring respect for women's rights.**

**Conclusion**

The organisation Réussir l'égalité Femmes-Hommes thanks the CEDAW Committee for taking into account its comments and proposals concerning trafficking and violence experienced by migrant women and girls, which results in prostitution and sexual exploitation.

The best means of prevention for the organisation Réussir l'égalité Femmes-Hommes is the schooling of refugee and migrant girls and the training of refugee and migrant women in their rights and in a profession so that they can have a decent life in complete financial autonomy.

1. In italics, the texts of the Draft for the GR [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. In bold characters REFH's suggestions [↑](#footnote-ref-3)